

MIAMI HERALD
11 April 1985

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 7-A

Cubans ousted for bungling the economy?

By ALFONSO CHARDY
Herald Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Several Cuban government officials were ousted recently as a result of President Fidel Castro's new campaign against inefficiency in the government-guided economy, U.S. intelligence analysts say.

The Americans believe that Castro's chiding of his managers in a speech Dec. 27 was linked to the removal of at least seven officials between Jan. 1 and April 1, including a senior Communist Party leader and two ministers linked to economic affairs.

The analysts also reported isolated incidents of labor unrest over pressures to improve productivity.

The incidents were said to include a two-hour strike earlier this year by two dozen tractor operators at a sugar mill in Granma province and protests by the Cuban Workers Confederation (CTC) over attempts to reduce the length of coffee breaks.

The intelligence assessments of recent Cuban events were made available to The Herald on condition that the texts not be quoted directly and that the names of the people and U.S. agencies involved not be mentioned.

One Cuban diplomat in Washington said some of the dismissals could be linked to "economic adjustments," but that most were either "routine rotations" or changes made in anticipation of the Third Cuban Communist Party Congress in December.

The envoy said he had no knowledge of a strike but acknowledged the CTC was "analyzing the question of coffee breaks."

The first of the changes came in January with the ouster of Antonio Perez Herrero from the powerful nine-member Communist Party secretariat.

The departure of Perez Herrero initially was linked to a possible internal squabble over Castro's decision to seek negotiations with the United States. Now, analysts link Perez Herrero's departure to the poor state of the economy. Two other Communist Party officials were dismissed in January along with Perez Herrero.

The removals of four more officials were announced April 1 in Granma, the Cuban Communist Party newspaper. The more recent changes involved two economic officials — Light Industry Minister Manuel Miyares Rodriguez and Francisco Garcia Paz, the minister and president of the state financial committee.